

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAO PAULO 0663

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (REF C BRASILIA 1919 VICE 1675)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY) US BR
SUBJ: PRESIDENT'S TRIP: MEETING WITH CARDINAL ARNS

REF: A) BOUTON-JOHNSON TELECON MARCH 4 B) BRASILIA 1411
C) BRASILIA 1719

1. REVEREND JAMES NELSON WRIGHT, A UNITED PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER, WHOM CARDINAL ARNS DESCRIBES AS A FRIEND IN HIS OCTOBER 29, 1977 LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, CALLED ON CONSUL GENERAL MARCH 6. HE SAID HE WAS DOING SO AT REQUEST OF CARDINAL, WITH WHOM HE HAD MET MARCH 4 AND 5. WRIGHT PROVIDED CONGEN WITH COPY OF ARNS' LETTER OF OCTOBER 29 AND ENCLOSURES WHICH WE SAW FOR THE FIRST TIME. (WRIGHT IS BROTHER OF PAULO STUART WRIGHT, WHO DISAPPEARED IN 1973 AND WHO HAD A CLAIM TO AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP WHICH HE MAY HAVE LOST BY ELECTION AS A STATE DEPUTY IN SANTA CATARINA.)

2. WRIGHT SAID CARDINAL ASK HIM TO APOLOGIZED FOR ANY EMBARRASSMENT TO CONGEN FROM PUBLICATION OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER. HOWEVER, WRIGHT
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OPENLY ADMITTED THAT HE HAD BEEN THE SOURCE OF THE FOLHA ARTICLES CONCERNING MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND CARDINAL ARNS. HE SAID HE HAD SHOWN LETTER TO FOLHA REPORTER WHO IS ALSO PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER. WRIGHT EXPLAINED THAT HE IS A MEMBER OF THE ECUMENICAL SERVICE COMMISSION (COORDENADORIA ECUMENICA DE SERVICO -- CESE) FOUNDED ON JUNE 13, 1973 IN SALVADOR BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF BRAZILIAN BISHOPS (CNBB), EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF BRAZIL, THE

EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH BRAZIL FOR CHRIST, THE METHODIST CHURCH, AND THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION FOR CENTRAL BRAZIL. WRIGHT STATED THAT THIS GROUP HAS UNDERTAKEN TO PUSH HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AND HAS IN THE PAST ISSUED THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON TWO OCCASIONS IN PORTUGUESE. WRIGHT SAID A THIRD PRINTING -- OF HALF A MILLION BOOKLETS -- IS ON THE PRESS AND THE CESE IS NOW CONSIDERING WHETHER TO DISTRIBUTE IT BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT. (COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT THE RECENT PUBLICITY CONCERNING THE EXCHANGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS BETWEEN CARDINAL ARNS AND PRESIDENT CARTER IS RELATED TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CESE BOOKLET.)

3. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO CONGEN, CESE IS A LEGITIMATE ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATION LINKED TO THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. WRIGHT SAID THAT THE MAJOR PROTESTANT CHURCHES WHICH HAVE NOT JOINED CESE ARE THE BAPTISTS, WHO HE SAID HAD DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE ORGANIZATION, AND THE LUTHERANS (OF WHICH GEISEL IS A MEMBER), BECAUSE OF "INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES."

4. WRIGHT ADVOCATED A JOINT MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT BY CARDINAL ARNS AND MANOEL DE MELLO, WHO IS HEAD OF THE EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH BRAZIL FOR CHRIST, FOUNDING AND CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE CESE AND ONE OF TWO BRAZILIAN MEMBERS ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN GENEVA. HE SAID THAT CARDINAL ARNS WOULD BE HAPPY TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT ALONE, OR IN COMPANY OF MANOEL DE MELLO, BUT WOULD BE UNWILLING TO

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MEET THE PRESIDENT WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BRAZILIAN BAPTIST CHURCH BECAUSE THE BAPTIST CHURCH HAD SHOWN NO INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE CESE AND A BAPTIST FOUR-STAR GENERAL, HUMBERTO SOUZA DE MELLO, HAD BEEN THE COMMANDER OF II ARMY IN SAO PAULO DURING THE WORST PERIOD OF TORTURES. I REPLIED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE WAS STILL BEING WORKED OUT AND THAT THE PUBLICITY ABOUT A MEETING WITH CARDINAL

ARNES HAD NOT BEEN HELPFUL. AS OLD FRIENDS, THE PRESIDENT MIGHT WELL WISH TO MEET WITH THE CARDINAL. WRIGHT RESPONDED THAT, OF ALL THE PROTESTANT LEADERS, MANOEL DE MELLO WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS INTERESTED IN HUMAN RIGHTS. WRIGHT SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE, FOR THIS REASON TO ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN DE MELLO AND THE PRESIDENT. WRIGHT SAID HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA (WOLA) AND WITH GEORGE LISTER OF ARA ABOUT THE DE MELLO ATTENDANCE AT A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT.

5. IN REGARD TO THE PRESIDENT'S DECEMBER 28 LETTER TO CARDINAL ARNS, FOLHA DE SAO PAULO PUBLISHED THE SECOND PART OF THE FIRST PARAGRAPH MARCH 5. THE FULL TEXT, EXCEPT FOR THE FIRST SENTENCE, HAS NOW APPEARED IN PRINT. FOLHA LARGELY PARAPHRASED THE FIRST SENTENCE, ALLUDING TO THE PAULO STUART WRIGHT CASE. JAMES WRIGHT

ASSURES THAT THE FIRST SENTENCE WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED. (COMMENT: THIS IS SOMEWHAT OF MOOT POINT, AS THINGS STAND NOW. WRIGHT SAID HE SHOWED HIS COPY OF THE LETTER TO ONE JOURNALIST AND SEVERAL OTHERS HAVE TOLD CONGEN OFFS THAT THEY HAD SEEN THE LETTER.)

6. COMMENT: REV. JAMES WRIGHT APPEARS TO BE CLOSE TO CARDINAL ARNS AS THE CARDINAL'S REFERENCE INDICATES. WRIGHT SAID THAT THE CARDINAL WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO WHOM HE TURNED WHEN HIS BROTHER DISAPPEARED IN 1973. HE SAID HE CONSIDERED THE CARDINAL "HIS PASTOR." WRIGHT IS THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION TO CENTRAL BRAZIL, A BALANCED, MODERATE CHURCHMAN WITH LONG EXPERIENCE IN BRAZIL. HIS FATHER WAS AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY BUT JAMES RENOUNCED HIS AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP TO FURTHER THE BRAZILIAN IMAGE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. HE IS PROGRESSIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

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NATIONALIZING THAT CHURCH. HE WAS IN FREQUENT TOUCH WITH THE CONGEN DURING 1973 AND 1974, WHEN HIS BROTHER'S CASE WAS BEING ACTIVELY SUPPORTED BY VARIOUS U.S. MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

7. IN OUR VIEW, REV. WRIGHT'S OBJECTIVES IN CREATING PUBLICITY ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER SEEM TO BE TO USE PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO (A) INCREASE PUBLIC OPINION PRESSURES ON THE GOB CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS AND (B) PUT FORWARD MANOEL DE MELLO AS A PROTESTANT HUMAN RIGHTS LEADER. WE JUDGE THAT CARDINAL ARNS PROBABLY SUPPORTS BOTH OBJECTIVES, BUT THE FORMER OBVIOUSLY MORE THAN THE LATTER. ARNS HAS MADE NO PUBLIC MENTION OF AN ECUMENICAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

WITH MANOEL DE MELLO, BUT HE HAS BEEN PHOTOGRAPHED WITH WRIGHT AND DE MELLO IN CONNECTION WITH CESE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES. WRIGHT NEVER STATED DIRECTLY THAT THE CARDINAL HAD ASKED HIM TO HAVE DE MELLO INCLUDED IN A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, ALTHOUGH HE STRONGLY IMPLIED IT. CHAPIN

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